

Mr Chairperson of the General Assembly,

Ladies and Gentlemen, members of GICAM,

Dear Employers!

The Executive Committee elected this day in turn comes to honour me by taking me to the presidency of our employers' organization. This is why I am very much thankful.

I would like to begin by expressing my deep appreciation for this great mark of confidence.

These thanks go to those who voted for our list, as well as to those who abstained, who, I remember, were not on our application form and indicated to us. I will never stop persuading them of the soundness of our approach, both by my behaviour and by our actions.

The responsibility which you have thus entrusted to us, is an honour of which we measure the weight and the gravity!

Through the massive vote it has just expressed, our General Assembly has chosen hope, unity, reconciliation and reform!

You have just expressed, through your massive membership in the programme 'GICAM in Action', your faith in a GICAM of Service, action and concrete results! A stronger and more enterprising GICAM! A more powerful and resolutely more conquering GICAM!

Your option for a renovated, worthy and respected employer, firmly committed to modernity and committed to defending the strategic interests of the company, was clearly heard!!!

It will henceforth belong to the list 'GICAM in Action', that you have just elected, to proudly bear this new hope of Cameroonian employers...

We take note of it, and we undertake to concretize it!!!

To this end, I am pleased to announce that, apart from the appointment of my modest person, the Committee has unanimously chosen Mr Sanda Oumarou, President of CENAINVEST, and Mr Emmanuel de Tailly, GM / SABC, to whom I would like to extend a standing ovation, to serve you as 1st and 2nd Vice-President of GICAM, respectively.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Employers' Union,

This is a new page in the history of our Inter-employer Grouping, which has just opened. We intend to write it together. It challenges us regarding the vanity of our individual and selfish ambitions, in view of the greatness of GICAM, a real institution, which will celebrate its sixtieth anniversary this year. We must serve it with humility and devotion, following the example of our predecessors and inspirers.

Henceforth, how can we not bring up with emotion and solemnity the memory of Joannès Desportes, the very first President of what was, until 1992, the 'Inter-professional Grouping for the Study and Coordination of Economic Interests', and All those who followed him?

Similarly, the special place occupied by President Samuel Kondo in our patronage history deserves special recognition and a special ovation: he was the first Cameroonian President of the Group in 1988!

And what about President André Siaka, who marked his indelible mark, the advent of modern GICAM from 1993 to 2008? He holds the record of longevity at the head of the GICAM, which he led for 15 good years! We would say years of glory; because we owe him the essential of the institutional dialogue 'public authorities / private sector', this imposing GICAM headquarters, the GICAM Bulletin, the GICAM Arbitration Centre, the Business Days, among other important achievements! Please pay him the tribute he deserves.

President Olivier Behle did not spend as much time at the head of our Group; He has nevertheless directed it with talent and brilliance, thus deserving of gratitude and respect!

Obviously, and in spite of the unexpected interruption of his second term, President André Fotso will have in turn irradiated our organization with innovative and refreshing ideas and initiatives, such as the 'Universities of GICAM', The GICAM School of Enterprise, and the work on the '100 proposals for the emergence of Cameroon' ... It is obvious that if destiny had not decided its fate in such a precocious way and knew the talent and the desire to 'do otherwise' who inhabited him, he would have written other pages even more beautiful during the period of our movement.

I would now like to **pay tribute to Mr François Armel and to his team** for the exemplary work he has done, on behalf of the newly elected Executive Committee and on behalf of all of you, temporary, so that the GICAM boat does not drown! On the contrary, they were able to bring it back to safety; proof...

It is the place to praise their high sense of the superior interests of GICAM; Those interests which they have placed above all individual and selfish ambition. For, in reality, you were not obliged to yourself, Mr President Armel, or to you, Vice-President Henri Fotso, let alone to your Executive Committee, to abridge a mandate that was still running for at least two years...

Your choice was determined by the noble and responsible perspective, that only a strong enough GICAM, a leadership re-legitimized by anointing a new vote, could confront with force and vigour the huge challenges that we face as employers, in the difficult environment of our companies!

Thank you for offering GICAM this refounding and re-launching opportunity!

Ladies and Gentlemen of GICAM,

As we see, we are all daughters and sons of a beautiful and great story, of which we owe ourselves to show worth and pride! The efforts of our predecessors have been remarkable. Their spirit and their works accompany us, and will serve us as a sting!

In the image of our predecessors, we will serve you with humility, faith and determination, in the fidelity of trust that you have just granted us!

Together, we have embraced the present and the future by collectively giving us a new impetus!

A new impetus for reforming our statutes, organization and modes of operation, for more capacity and efficiency in action!

New momentum in the mobilization of resources, financial, human and organizational, with the aim of achieving the objectives we have just set for ourselves!

A new impetus, so that GICAM is no longer merely a force for proposals, but rather a force for action, influencing economic, tax and customs policies in the direction of promoting local businesses and strengthening their competitiveness!

Impetus: How salutary! For it is worth noting that it is at this price and at this price only that GICAM, like the biggest employers' organizations in Africa and the world, will now impose itself by its active power through the answers to all the strategic questions engaging the future of our companies and our investments!!!

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Employers' Union,

It is to give shape to this vision that our mandate will be guided by the threefold requirement of unity, reconciliation and reform.

The unity requirement will require us to spare no effort to unite and federate all the employers, within the common house that is the GICAM. We therefore intend to invest our time, energy and human resources. We are now officially and solemnly stretching out our hand to those who for one reason or another have turned their backs to our Group.

The reconciliation requirement will guide us in the search for consensus, in order to minimize and resolve our differences, bearing in mind that the superior interests of the GICAM and the enterprise must always triumph, is worth it!

We will work tirelessly to ensure that our institution is always and even a haven of peace and harmony, a welcoming and soothing environment, cleared of all the tensions that have often agitated it ... I know I can count on the talents of mediator, the availability of many of our members! Especially those of our elders, whose coaching and advice will be particularly valuable!!!

The reform requirement will require us, very modestly, to solicit from now on, independent expertise for an institutional and functional audit of our organization. This audit will offer us new avenues and orientations for reforms and actions, to make GICAM, one of the most modern and powerful employers' organizations, capable of supporting Cameroon's emergence project. In this perspective, the institutional audit that I have just mentioned should enable the rapid review of our statutes and our organization, with a view to facilitating the gathering and better participation of all employer bodies and initiatives within the GICAM. This is in favour of a more united, stronger, more representative, and therefore more powerful Cameroonian employers.

This reform should also ensure a better involvement of the Committee of Wise Persons, strengthen the capacities of specialized trade federations and sectoral groupings so that they can better identify, formulate and defend their concerns within the GICAM!

The reform should also increase the effectiveness of the current thematic committees; completely restructure the current Executive Secretariat, for better targeted and efficient services to members and businesses. Because our GICAM will be first and foremost '**the House of Cameroonian Enterprise**', with a particular regard for SMEs, given the often-vital urgency of their specific problems!!!

In addition, through this restructuring, it will be necessary to identify and to propose new niches of financial resources, in order to increase the financial resources of GICAM, unfortunately highly deficit today, because it is essentially based on the contributions of its members.

Obviously, these proposals for reforming the governance and restructuring of GICAM will be presented to you for validation and adoption at the next General Assembly in December. One of the key measures will be to reduce the mandate of the Executive Council to 3 years, immediately applicable to the mandate you have just given us.

In parallel with these structural reforms, we intend to **refocus GICAM's action on urgent economic, fiscal and customs issues, which are a long-term commitment to the future of our companies.**

Indeed, in a context of economic gloom, where there is more and more talk of a return to the IMF and a new Structural Adjustment, it is important to highlight, as the President of the Republic in his circular of 20 June 2017 on the preparation of the 2018 Budget, that 'the private sector (...) remains the driving force behind the growth of the economy. As such, GICAM must take a strong position in favour of the protection of companies and local industry.

Hence the need to present to the Government and development partners an alternative view of the current and actual situation of the private sector, a sector-by-sector basis, to make an objective diagnosis, and realistic development proposals that take into account the future of our businesses.

It is the project to produce a 'white paper of the Cameroonian economy' by the GICAM, which we hope to present by the end of the year. This document will serve as a basis for GICAM's alternative proposals in the forthcoming upcoming negotiations with governments, the IMF and other partners ... Short, medium and long-term solutions will be presented and will be the subject of special discussions with public authorities and development partners.

The specific situation of SMEs / SMIs will be treated in a special way, taking into account their vulnerability and their socio-economic importance. This importance justifies the forthcoming organization of a Forum of Cameroonian SMEs during which all problems specific to this category of companies will be addressed.

Similarly, a specific look will be made on local industries, true creators of wealth and jobs of added value and growth, without which there is hardly any emergence possible! They require privileged treatment, controlled by economic patriotism, with regard to competition, unfair practices and a particularly aggressive international environment of which they are the first victims.

We understand the importance of regular production and keeping up to date the dashboards of the Cameroonian private sector, sector by sector, as well as other monitoring elements and economic intelligence.

These data will enable us in the future to weigh sufficiently in the drafting of the budget law, defining Cameroon's fiscal, customs and budgetary objectives and

requirements.... Of GICAM, the genuine barometer of the Cameroonian economy, so that in the future all these decision-making processes are elaborated taking into account realistic information, analysis and proposals from the business community.

The aim is to achieve, fairly quickly and in any case in the medium term, a tax system for development and competitiveness that is much more equitable for companies and based on the payment of fair prices, evaluated on the basis of the actual results of the activity.

But already, GICAM's contribution to the next budget law is a priority of our roadmap for the next 6 months and tomorrow will be a task force to deal with this crucial issue, and your proposals in this regard are welcome!!

The same realistic vision, of GICAM focused on action and concrete results, will guide all our other approaches ... Notably those aimed at improving the business environment, facilitating the financing conditions of serious companies, promoting promising sectors for our companies, access to public procurement and subcontracting, commitment to the promotion of good governance, steps to lead the State to respect its commitments, in particular financial vis-à-vis the private sector, the problem of non-repayment of VAT credits, the fight against corruption and harassment of businesses by public officials, support for the dematerialization of operations, administrative formalities and other services provided to businesses, support for the fight against fraud and smuggling, the establishment of an official status for employers, and all other planned actions in the programme 'GICAM in Action', which you have just approved!

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Members,

This is to say that the team 'GICAM in Action' will not skimp on any means, sacrifice, for the concretisation of strong, powerful, protective, influential, audible and even more effective GICAM, for which you have invested!

We will work methodically, rigorously, and vigorously!

It is at this price, and at this price only that together, we will manage to ensure the influence of a GICAM of services to members, a GICAM of strategic and economic intelligence, and especially a GICAM of the influence of the public authorities, with a view to the effective and efficient resolution of the concrete and urgent problems of our companies...

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Employers' Union,

I know you expect a lot from us. You are right, for you have just made the choice of audacity and action! The choice of a GICAM that dares! We are fully aware of this ... Nothing will weaken our determination to serve a mature employer!

On the other hand, for our actions to be conducive and credible to our partners, it is important that we be demanding, in terms of responsibility and ethics, towards ourselves, our social, fiscal and environmental obligations, etc. In short! That we are truly civic enterprises!

For my part, I very much wish that the history and judgment of men, retain the commitment of the team 'GICAM in Action', its irreproachable determination in the fulfilment of the triple requirement of gathering, reconciliation and refounding, in the service of a noble cause: that of the Cameroonian companies, large, medium and small, that we want to boost, citizen and competitive, carried by prestigious and respected employers!!! Make things happen!!!

The certainty is unshakeable, that together we can, we must, write one of the most beautiful pages in the history of GICAM.

Long live the GICAM!

Long live Cameroon!!!

Short, medium and long-term solutions will be presented and will be the subject of special discussions with public authorities.